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## THE NORTH-AMERICAN REVIEW.

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*Philosophical Essays ; to which are subjoined, copious Notes, critical and explanatory, and a Supplementary Narrative ; with an Appendix. By James Ogilvie. 8vo. pp. 416. Philadelphia: John Conrad. 1816.*

MR. OGILVIE has long been known in this country, for fine recitations and rather indifferent discourses, delivered from what he calls the Rostrum ; and we are among those, who think that he has some essential qualifications for an orator. In his less ambitious days, or at least those which seemed to be so, we thought he furnished us a very rational and even useful entertainment in his publick exhibitions. He had indeed a little of the air of an adventurer, but this perhaps was chiefly owing to the novelty of his literary enterprise. His profession had some of the enticements of the theatre, without any of the mischiefs, which the scrupulous are fond of ascribing to it. And there was good reason to think he would be satisfied with his fame in the line he had chosen, for it could not be narrow or worthless. It was a part of his purpose to awaken literary curiosity, and he contributed with a liberality that should not be forgotten, and which is too seldom equalled, to the support of literary and charitable institutions throughout our country.—In his labours, indeed, he seemed to be alone. He was upon an experiment, about the success of which it was even idle to form an opinion. But his energy and courage sustained him, and over all his enterprise, there was thrown a sort of enthusiasm, which will always awaken interest, though it may not bear a severe scrutiny, or prove of very great service in less obtrusive and more exploring labours than his.—In addition to his publick exhibitions, we heard some time ago of his more systematick attempts to revive amongst us the fainting power of oratory ; that he had gone so far as to teach the art in a Southern College, where his success and fame were proved by illuminations, and we believe too

by medals and written testimony ; and more than this, that he had actually undertaken a visit to our cities and colleges, with a view to spread the glories of the long-neglected Rostrum, and to do what in him lay for the establishment of institutions of oratory, in a country that seemed to him almost the only one where its legitimate power could now be felt.—There are men who will laugh at all this, but we are not of their number. The overflowings of zeal and enthusiasm in a projector of useful improvements, are often very favourable symptoms, especially when he has looked his plan through and through, and prepared himself for temporary ridicule or indifference, whilst he looks forward with confidence to ultimate success. We do not pretend to say that Mr. Ogilvie had quite enough sober calculation, to inspire universal confidence. But surely there is no great reluctance in our countrymen to encourage novelties ; they are not generally startled by the boldness or zeal of adventurers ; and as Mr. Ogilvie knew and loved his art so well, it seemed only necessary to persuade men of its utility, to secure to his largest schemes the most bountiful encouragement.

As to the neglect of the art amongst us, there could hardly be a doubt ; and it is now so great, in this part of the country at least, that the most timid may well let go their alarms about the dangers of eloquence. The standard with us is so very low, that we hear men called orators for smooth fluency or unimpassioned gracefulness and propriety. A hard clean voice, that travels for an hour over all sorts of surface, without one break or tone of feeling, with no variation of sound save that which is required by the punctuation, will be accounted the voice of an orator. We apprehend that the fanatick, with his holy wildness, approaches much nearer to good oratory, than most of our sensible speakers. One would think we had come to disdain ornament and manner when the subject is vast ; that whilst we allow the classicks to govern our taste in every thing else, we had rejected them in their high examples of eloquence. And the effect is that our speakers appear to bestow about an equal measure of anxiety upon every thing they take up—whilst the interest of the hearer waxes dull, and passion fairly goes out. This should be expected when eloquence becomes

little more than a business of careful dissection or explanation, and when hearers have fallen into the habit of inspecting the manner of an orator, and guessing that he has nothing else to offer, if he is only bold enough to venture out of the old walk of tranquil utterance. In quiet seasons, when the state seems an invisible trifle to be talked about only, and men's consciences can sleep under their duties, they are very willing to listen to a fine orator as they would to the players; they are entertained by his frolicks, and give in to all his illusions as they would to the fairy-work of a dream. But important subjects, such as may call us presently into action, are in a great measure left to work their own way; they hardly call forth a natural expression of earnest concern, and the hearer is too apt to conclude that he may proportion his own interest by that of his teacher. It is easy, in such a case, to rail against the evils and abuses of eloquence, and to shew how much better it is to leave truth to its own power, to lay by the drapery of speech, and maintain a sturdy good sense and homely simplicity of manner. And we admit, that if the end of just eloquence could be attained by a naked presentment of cold thought, there would be no reason to complain at our indifference to the art, for we should be rid of its evils, without missing its uses. But no one will say that the world has yet got to this ethereal purity and susceptibility. Men must be quickened. In spite of good sense, they will be heavy about their duties. It is in their hearts or imaginations that we are to find principles which shall lend energy to their convictions; it is by the terrors or persuasions of eloquence, that we can best give a presence and reality to danger, guilt and virtue. And though it is highly honourable to men at the present day, that they can value the very plainest sense, let it come from whom it may, yet we think it must be set down to indolence, or bad taste, or a spirit of pride or narrow calculation, that the leaders of publick opinion are so indifferent to the uses of eloquence.

But however important the art may be, we are very far from wishing to see it as powerful now as it once was. We would not have our orators study the ancient masters too much, nor look on them as models. We suspect a lit-

tle, that when Mr. Ogilvie talks with so much enthusiasm of 'vindicating the nascent glory of the Rostrum,' and about the revival of his art, that his mind has "day-dreams" of modern Ciceros. His own mode of popular declamation makes us fear, that the oratory 'indigenously American and essentially republican,' which he hopes to establish amongst us, would hardly raise the character, or fortify the immunities of a free people. Whenever our scholars undertake to judge of the institutions and practices of their own time, they are not content to stay at home, and study the present condition and taste of men; but they run, as if by instinct, into their endeared classical enclosures, and lay down the law for us as they find it there. No matter that two or three thousand years have rolled between us and the memorable eras of ancient literature; or that we live under a rougher sky, or that a deluge of barbarism has washed over the mind, since it was impressed by the fair and delicate forms of ancient art. We are still carried back to the old examples, and told that the eloquence, which suited the wild rabble of the early democracies, will do in these colder days of good sense. Men, who talk in this way, are, we trust, much better acquainted with their libraries, and have more to do with their prejudices, than with the actual condition of their fellow-beings. They are brought up to see beauty only in the dead. They feel a taint in the rude mixture of living, busy, pains-taking mortals. They would carry you into their closets and cast you over again, that you may be stirred by pure Roman passion, burn at fine pictures of ancient virtue, and feel the magick of such allusions as thrilled through the mob like lightning, when Cicero and Demosthenes were making heroes out of every body but themselves.

The character, taste and situation of the ancients should be taken into the account, whenever we think of modelling our oratory by theirs, or imagine that its power may be as great. Society will change its form and spirit, with the progress of years and by the help of experience. The excesses even of polished barbarism will give place to deliberation. Passion will in time be mingled with intellect, and judgment go along with feeling. A simple natural taste in literature and the arts, is sometimes seen

to revive in the midst of civilization and luxury, and after a love of tawdriness or mechanical primness seemed as general and fixed as an original principle of our nature. We should be careful then, how we judge of society now, its wants and taste, from what we know of men in other ages or climates. Refinement, polish, freedom, institutions and customs with the same names and looking to the same ends, are nevertheless very different things in different periods of history. We should hardly think it well to turn our free governments, our oblations, or our hearths, into those of the ancient Commonwealths; nor do we think it would be any better to adopt now their declamatory eloquence. We should say that the practical examples which antiquity offers are more of error than of excellence—for warning than imitation. The ancient oratory was for men who were given up to passion, and who thronged the forum to have it nourished and directed. It was not their way to prepare themselves at home upon questions of great public concern. It was by action, not by sound independent opinion, that they sent their influence through the state. They trusted themselves to sympathy and to the orators, who were a sort of self-appointed political teachers, feeling little restraint from the shrewd criticism of a mob, fighting against selfish rivals for sway over the supreme multitude, and sure that he only could be the conqueror who produced the greatest excitement.—We do not deny that there are “fine raptures” in the old eloquence, and that exquisite specimens have come down to us, in all the departments of public speaking that were then known. This is just what we should expect; and so long as we can keep these specimens quiet in our libraries, or regard them in connexion with their own times, we shall be as fond as any one of the treasure.

We by no means say, that men have less sensibility now than the ancients, even in those colder and purer regions, where free states are supposed to flourish most. There may be less noise and more depth in our enthusiasm now. Our emotions are more inward and lasting. They grow more from secret contemplation than from public sympathy. Our judgments are formed after reflection, and a moral spirit pervades them. What we have lost in roughness or inflammability, is probably more than made up

in tempered vigour. A man's worth or influence is not the less felt, because he respects his own judgment, sets himself sturdily against vain pretensions or lying declamation, and shrinks from the contagion of a mob as from pestilence.

It should not be forgotten, that men are readers now. The art of printing has probably done more for independence of mind than all legislation or revolution, by putting the thoughts of men into the hands of others, where they may be ransacked and proved. We can bring them down to skeletons, and then see if they have strength, connection and object. A habit of intelligent watchfulness is thus formed in the people, and the orator feels it. He aims less at forcing publick sentiment and drowning judgment in declamation. "It is not enough to speak, but to speak true." He is under the rebuke of controversy, and feels the influence of keen observers about him, deliberating with him upon common interests, which they value more than his exhibitions. He remembers that they are fond of looking into their work before they begin; of approaching it with the confidence of knowledge, not of ignorance. Of course he must trust to the importance of his subject, and to earnest, wide and clear discussion. He must work through the judgment to the heart, and when he has reached and moved it, he will leave there a deep and inextinguishable energy.—When we are upon important deliberation, we are diverted at seeing a man crowded with himself instead of his subject, and bent upon making a fine speech which we are to pay for with applauses. His tricks and parade will not serve him, nor weigh with us, when we are preparing to act. We look about then for men in whom we can confide, not for the orator who glitters upon feast-days, who toils for effect, and can declaim another man's thoughts as well as his own. We prefer natural oratory, such as the occasion prompts and justifies. And perhaps it is not going too far, to say that the best orators of modern times, are those who have been made by the circumstances that pressed immediately upon them, springing up at once and with resistless power, in seasons of gloom and dismay, as if they gathered inspiration from the darkness.

We believe too, that in the free states of our time, there is something worth preserving, and much too precious to be entrusted with mere declaimers. The prudent, who know the worth of their treasures, are alarmed when they hear a noise made about them. A good government is too awful to be touched by the vulgar or turbulent; and when society has reached something like settled order, and habits of reflection, it should not be suffered to fall again under what we must call the savage influence of mere passion. We do indeed hear men talk, even now, about national glory and the worth of conquests; but there is amongst us a quiet consciousness of domestick comfort, a sentiment towards the country as a home and shelter, which seem to have had but little place in the warlike commonwealths of old. We have still the distinctions of rich and poor, of the illiterate and wise; and in the unobtrusive orders of society, there may be little of that abject vanity, which prompted the ancient vulgar to compel the courtesy of the great, and to bluster around the common altars and monuments, as if they feared that their own importance would be forgotten. But for all this, we should disdain to compare the multitude in a modern commonwealth, with the street-rabble of Rome, whether in good sense, honesty, real elevation of sentiment, political intelligence, just views of national happiness and glory, or the firm purpose of securing them.—We believe that a modern orator never need complain, that there is no field for his powers. When we look into English eloquence, we think we can find there more intellect and poetry, and passion that worked more deeply and surely, though with less tumult, than in all the polished or boisterous harangues of the old orators. It surely ought not to be a cause of complaint with a great man, that the age he lives in requires the highest exercise of his best powers, and all the wealth of his mind, and forbids him to substitute clamour, ornament or unmeaning vehemence, for strength and becoming zeal. He should be proud that he is dealing with moral and intelligent beings, whose judgments he may convince and establish, and whose passions he cannot hope to bring out, till they have travelled over the cool and pure region of the mind.—On the whole, we believe that in modern free states, there is room in all the departments



of eloquence, (and we have no time to distinguish them) for the display of what was of real practical worth in ancient oratory; that we have advantages and opportunities peculiar to ourselves; and that the means of abusing the art are greatly straitened by the intelligence and settled habits of society. And this is all we can now say to the scholar who loves the masters, or to the anxious observer who argues against oratory from its abuses.

We shall not enter into the inquiry how far oratory is an art. The ancients had an easy way of resolving it into discipline, as they did poetry into inspiration or genius. We believe that the art, (for such in some degree it certainly is) should bring us as near as possible to life. The instructor should give us such aids as we can turn to account when we go out into the world, whatever we may find the taste and manners of society to be. He is not to carry art so far, as to give a boy the habits of a school-room, which shall make him awkward in a change of condition. He is not to kill his enthusiasm and genius by bringing him up to imitate models. Nor would we have Mr. Ogilvie fall into the mistake, that fine specimens of oratory on his Rostrum will be of much practical use to the learner in after life. For though he has not told us very precisely what he means by that oratory, yet as we have seen him upon his stage, we may take his example, together with a few hints in his book, for an explanation of his views. And we should say from these, that such oratory is chiefly intended for gratification of taste. The speaker comes before us as an artist. His manner is studied; he aims at effect; and as we are looking out for fine points, he is no less careful to make them. He is loosened from the restraints which society has imposed upon speakers, who deal in realities and present business. We are ready to allow him all the license of poetry. We give ourselves up to illusions, and are not offended even with inflated emptiness, if it only pour itself out in fine tones. Mr. Ogilvie himself has often convinced us, that any thing will do, "being seasoned with a gracious voice."—This sort of oratory, or popular declamation may indeed be useful, in stirring ambition, or presenting specimens of fine and varied modulation. But we believe that Mr. Ogilvie must keep his Rostrum for the ladies and gentlemen, and teach

his boys to be good speakers by the severe and simple discipline of a school. He has drudgery and details to go through as well as other teachers. He must shew the learner his weapons and their uses. He has little dull errors to correct, and much to insist upon that is merely mechanical. And after all, he must send out his boys into the world to ripen. We wish him great success as a teacher of his art, and think that he may be really useful.

We took up his book, expecting to find in it some scheme for the improvement of oratory, since we had heard so lately that he had applied himself to teaching the art. We looked at least for one oration touching the Rostrum itself, but that we find is reserved for a *second* volume. We had reason to think he would say something more particular of the uses and evils of his art, the means of reviving it, and of the obstacles to be met and removed. The title to be sure, might have saved us from such vain expectations; but we thought that "*Philosophical Essays, with copious notes, a supplementary narrative and an appendix,*" together with the miscellaneous character of Mr. Ogilvie's mind, would justify our hope that his favourite art would stand out in every part of the book. We have indeed been a good deal disappointed; and the only apology we can offer for saying so much upon a subject, which the book has so little to do with, is, that we have long been in the habit of associating Mr. Ogilvie with the improvement of his art in this country. We think too that the subject is important; and what perhaps weighed with us now even more, is our belief that Mr. Ogilvie, will never give us another chance to say anything of him or of oratory, since the appearance of his *second* volume, like his ambition to be a celebrated philosopher, depends, alas, upon the reception of the one before us.

It is high time to say a little of this work, and to apprise our readers that Mr. Ogilvie, in the prosecution of his literary enterprize, 'arrived a few months ago at a stage somewhat critical, and farther success became hopeless or worthless, without the acquisition of permanent and extended celebrity as a philosophical writer.' We are very sorry for it, and should even think our author had merely fallen into a sudden mistake, were it not that

he says these very words a second time at the close of his book. And he leaves it to the publick to determine by their reception of this volume, whether he shall enjoy 'that share of permanent and extended celebrity, which is essential to his further success.' A philosophical writer of permanent and extended celebrity! If the man were our enemy, we should "thank him for teaching us that word." But we are always in good humour with a work and an author that look to such high matter, and after reading along a little while, we became so used to greatness, that we could hear Mr. Ogilvie promise it to his own name, as patiently as if he had awarded it to another.

We turned first to the Narrative. We are somewhat at a loss to know why it is called *supplementary*, but we think it by far the most curious and entertaining part of the book. It gives us our author's history, so far as it is connected with his literary and oratorical pursuits, and lets us a good deal into his infirmities of mind and constitution; his moments of 'unassured consciousness and faintness of vital energy, vibrating betwixt the sick bed and the sepulchre,' as well as his glows and irradiations of mind. You would judge from his own account, that all his experience lay wholly out of life, and differed from that of other men in the exquisiteness of luxury as well as of agony. This may be ascribed in a great measure to a deplorable lack of that plain common sense, which teaches one the coarse realities of life and what he owes to himself and his neighbour, and makes him provident for the means of real usefulness and unbroken happiness.—Mr. Ogilvie shews singular indiscretion, in keeping himself forever in sight. In his book he is as much the principal figure, as on his Rostrum, with all his parade, and outlandish costume about him. His airs and extravagance may divert mischievous readers, and most are of that class; but the diversion will surely be at his own expense, and may cost him his good nature at least. He has looked upon the world these many years; but we fear that he has lived very much out of those wholesome regions, where a man learns to rein in his enthusiasm, to feed his vanity in secret, to feel that society can do very well without him, that it has a resolute way of ridiculing those who

proclaim their own merit, and values that greatness only which oozes out "from the works that a man doeth." Still there are strong symptoms in his book of generosity, zeal, tenderness, and even loftiness; and we are inclined to think that after all there is more of error than of want in his mind. There seems to be a perpetual disease, a malignant *sensitiveness* hanging over him, and though he may be betrayed into fine accidents, we should hardly look for the useful results of a sound and governed mind. But we believe he may yet be useful and happy, if he will consent to think and act a little more like the rest of the world; if he will but remember that failure is a much better instructor than ambition or illusion, and then turn back his enthusiasm to spheres where his success has been sure and beneficial.

We find in the Narrative the stages through which he has passed, and how he came so abruptly upon the third and truly critical one, which we before alluded to. After his arrival in this country (for he is a native of Scotland) he taught a school in Virginia for thirteen years; and during this period he had constant opportunities to cultivate oratory, for which he had always a great passion, and in a certain species of which he seems to think that nature or education had given him uncommon skill. Flattered by his success in the art, and exhausted by school-keeping and opium, the thought of delivering orations on the Rostrum suddenly crossed his imagination. Assured of 'ultimate, speedy and splendid success,' he yielded to the thought, shut up his school, and began his new career, or more properly his first stage, in 1809. It was at this time he became known to our readers.—The second stage presents our author as a teacher and lecturer in oratory. He began his labours at the college of South Carolina, and received the entire approbation of the Government. The scholars got up an illumination for him, and surprised him by a transparency over the door of the chapel, exhibiting the American Eagle, with our orator's name in her talons. And when his course of instruction was ended, they presented him with a gold medal 'which has since been uniformly suspended around his neck and proudly too,' in his exhibitions on the Rostrum.—The third and critical stage shall be given in his own words.

"Having entered thus auspiciously on the second stage in the prosecution of the design, which he had undertaken, he began to fix his eye steadily on the third, as it distinctly emerged above the edge of his widening horizon, and loomed and lowered, like the Alpine heights, when they first arrested the gaze of Hannibal.

"The stage to which he now so pompously adverts, was the establishment of *efficient* professorships of oratory in the Colleges, and the erection of spacious and magnificent halls, (exclusively dedicated to the exercise and exhibition of oratory on the Rostrum.) in the principal cities of the American republick." Sup. Narr. lxii.

The reader must make out if he can, what there is in this third stage, which required Mr. Ogilvie to become all at once a great philosopher. The book leaves us very much in the dark upon this point. He proposed the plan, which we have just stated, before the Legislature of South Carolina, in an elaborate oration; he made two distinct efforts to secure its accomplishment, in his last visit to Charleston; he declared his disinterestedness, and that he would not be prevailed upon to accept one of the contemplated professorships. But it would not do. His hearers applauded and smiled, and thought it would be impossible to bring any thing to pass at present. Whereupon our author seems to have gone frantick. He expresses his disappointment in what he calls the 'idiosyncratick idiom,' which he frankly declares will be distinctly understood by only one in a hundred, and we unfortunately are among the ninety and nine. We know nothing further of the third stage, except that our author means to try once more in Charleston, and make similar attempts in all our principal cities, except Philadelphia, where, for a reason we shall mention presently, he has an 'assured presentiment of discomfiture.' We wonder a little how he dared to print his book there, and should ask him if its ill success might not be ascribed to the malign influences of that city, had he not assured us, that it is unphilosophical to resort to extraordinary causes, when ordinary ones are adequate to explain a fact.—There is yet a fourth stage in our author's pursuits, but this is wholly in the mist, or rather has not yet 'emerged above the edge of his widening horizon.' The narrative closes with bright visions of the future glories of

the Rostrum. The whole is written in extremely bad taste, and sprinkled with specimens of very ambitious and yet humble criticism, which we cannot stop to notice. We ought to state that the author speaks of himself in the third person, and we account this the most modest thing in the whole book. Perhaps however, this very circumstance tempted him to say things, and in a manner too, that would have startled him if he had spoken in the first person. If therefore we may prescribe for his vanity, we will venture to recommend that he should hereafter use no sort of cover for it.

Mr Ogilvie is as free to tell of his adventures as of his schemes or infirmities. We will give one or two from the narrative.—The first happened during his first visit at Philadelphia, while our author was yet a novice in the world. The college hall, which is devoted to publick worship on Sunday, and to science the rest of the week, was offered to Mr. Ogilvie for the delivery of his lectures, on his express assurance that they should contain no sentiment which could offend persons of any religious persuasion. He accordingly erected his Rostrum in front of the pulpit, and in one of his orations, after speaking of the blessed effects of our religion, he gave his hearers to know that his observations had regarded christianity merely as improving the condition of society.

‘The awful and mysterious question in relation to its divine origin, I forbear to examine.

“O pity, great Father of light and of life,  
A heart that fain would not wander from thee,  
So humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride,  
From *doubt* and from *darkness*, thou only canst free.

“But darkness and doubt are *not* flying away,  
Alas, I still roam, in conjecture forlorn,  
Nor breaks on the wanderer faint and astray,  
The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.”

The effect of this, according to Mr. Ogilvie, must have been tremendous. ‘The silence was deep and dead. His auditors seemed even to hold their breath and to stare at each other with “stony eyes.” The late C. B. Browne,

who was present, told Mr. Ogilvie afterwards, that his feelings on that occasion "made an era in his sensations." But our orator, not aware how things were going, proceeded to finish his oration, and closed with a thundering, prophetick harangue against Bonaparte, filled with that hyperbole and bombast, and uttered with that impassioned vehemence, which he fears (we think he should rather rejoice at it) will always be most acceptable to a miscellaneous audience. This explosion seems to have brought to his hearers, for they gave him 'a plaudit loud, long and apparently unanimous.' But nothing would do. The town was against him, and every body he met was ready with remonstrance, or disheartening tidings. In the language of an adviser, "he had thrown away an empire of fame and emolument;"—in his own more glorious phraseology, 'he had dashed the brimming and golden goblet of success from his eager lip, dashed it almost untasted!' And all this came of his making a pretty and unchristian perversion of two stanzas of Beattie's Hermit. In spite of his expressions of sorrow for his offensive avowal of skepticism, he was denied the further use of the hall, and we believe he has never since 'asserted the dignity of the Rostrum' in that offended city. Sup. Narr. xxii.

In his first visit to New York he shews himself once more in his noviciate of worldly wisdom, and well nigh brought the Rostrum into jeopardy, by his desperate love of saying something very fine.

'Towards the close of an oration which he then delivered there, he was led to direct and fix the attention of his auditors on an epoch (preeminently memorable, even amid a twenty years' succession of astonishing events and prodigious revolutions,) the portentous epoch! "when the conqueror of Lodi and Marengo, pointing with his baton to the white cliffs of Albion, whetted the insatiable cupidity, and infuriated the souls, of two hundred thousand cannibals, disciplined to every deed of death and desolation, by describing in 'words that burned' on his lips, and in imagery which rage and rapine embodied and half realized as he spoke, the treasures of London, the plunder of the queen of isles, the beauty and the booty of the garden of the earth, the subjugation of the magna virum mater; to whose daughters the Paphian goddess had lent her cestus, and every grace her pe-

cular attraction ; to whose sons Pallas had consigned her ægis, Pæmona her cornucopia, and Neptune had for a season transferred his trident."

"The audience, (which was composed of nearly one thousand persons,) catching suddenly and simultaneously, the feelings of the speaker, gave vent to their sympathetick enthusiasm, in a loud, protracted, and he believes heart-felt plaudit. The room shook, as if it had been rocked by an earthquake, as if it had reverberated the thunder's or the cannon's roar.—When the plaudit ceased, a gentleman, (who turned out to be an united Irishman,) 'deliberately rose from his seat in the middle of the room; assumed an erect and disdainful port; looked intrepidly and indignantly around, and without casting a glance, or directing his hand towards the Rostrum, but turning both successively and slowly to the auditors in every part of the room, hissed with set teeth and with an intensity of sibilation, that indicated unusual vehemence in the feeling by which it was prompted.—His proceeding excited a lively and general emotion of momentary anger. Frowning brows and flashing eyes were bent upon him, idly bent! The hisser, with an air of calm defiance, conscious intrepidity, and scornful unconcern, resumed his seat.

"At that moment, the situation of the orator, (then a novice in such scenes, and destitute of that habitual self-possession, and imperturbable serenity of soul, which experience only can attemper and confirm,) was critical and distressing. In the school of experience he has, he trusts, acquired a self-control and self-subjection, which, to *him*, would make the recurrence of such an incident amusing merely: At this time, if the contents of a loaded pistol were discharged at him, whilst he was declaiming on the Rostrum, (unless the contents pierced his heart, opened an artery, from which life-blood would burst in a torrent, or inflicted intolerable agony;) so unexpected and improbable an incident, could not *now* disturb him for a moment, or *but for a moment*. Far different were his feelings *then*. He experienced inexpressible disquietude. Advancing to the very verge of the Rostrum, and with a gesture, attitude and expression of countenance, which emphatically indicated the most anxious and earnest wish to be allowed to proceed; he succeeded in restoring order, and preventing outrage and violence, in an audience as polite and respectable as were ever, probably, assembled in that populous, opulent and flourishing city. Sup. Narr. xxviii.

The newspapers took the matter up at once, and the Evening Post advised the hisser "to take leave of ab-



sence during the delivery of any orations which Mr. Ogilvie might afterwards pronounce.”—A reply to this in a democratick paper gave notice, “that if the oration were repeated, and the Editor of the *Post* were present, the amusement of the evening would be diversified and enhanced by a game at leap-frog, in the course of which, that Editor would amuse and astonish the audience, by the most prodigious leap, from a window of Attick altitude, ever witnessed in that or any other city.” This brought out our orator, who ‘arrested an altercation, so hateful to his soul, so offensive to the dignity, and damnatory to the nascent glory of the Rostrum; so abhorrent to all the aspirations and chivalrick enthusiasm, which had impelled him to undertake, and governed him in the execution of so romantick an enterprise.’ Mr. Ogilvie’s card drew from the hisser the very flattering explanation, that the insult was not intended for Mr. Ogilvie, who was a native of Great Britain, and expressed only a natural feeling towards his own country, but that the hiss was meant for the audience, who listened silently to marked compliments to their own country, and “clapped for King George.” Our author says, ‘he admires his intrepidity with all his heart.’

During the delivery of an oration in a small town in Kentucky, our orator, or rather the audience, was disturbed by an ‘inebriated intruder.’ He had now grown so old on the Rostrum, that instead of being embarrassed by this incident, he turned it most admirably to a practical use. Inferring from the conduct of his hearers, who were soothing the drunkard in the most friendly manner, that he was a man of respectable station and character, our orator, with singular delicacy,

“raised his voice to a tone, that drowned the unmeaning noise of this Salamander of Alcohol, and advanced in the delivery of his oration, till a passage occurred, in which the misery and ignominy of intemperance were depicted in strong colours. In pronouncing this passage, he descended from the Rostrum, and, advancing with a slow and pausing step, towards the bench, on which the involuntary and, probably, unconscious violator of decorum sat, or on which he had staggered and lay stretched; continuing to declaim, as he advanced, till he approached the mind-deserted body as nearly as he could. Here, for a few mo-

ments, he stood still ; ceased to declaim ; folded his arms, and resting his eye on the floor, slowly and solemnly said.—“ Where example so emphatically arrests attention, declamation may well be dumb : It is, and *can be*, but babbling and impertinence, in the presence of a warning, that addresses the soul through the senses.” Sup. Narr. xxxi.

We think Sterne would have made a fine picture of this. As we are not told, what effect this singular appeal produced, we have a suspicion, that it was very far from gratifying the utmost wish of the orator.

Mr. Ogilvie should know better than to bring living, retired individuals before the publick, especially to abuse them. The notoriety which one gains from being extolled or calumniated in print, may be gratifying to vulgar or abandoned spirits ; and distinguished characters must submit to such display, as to the order of society ; but the quiet, secluded and delicate must shrink from being made publick property in this way. In this country, or in our part of it at least, we are not yet used to this profligate introduction of private names into a book ; we are not proud of the honour, and, we trust, the victims are not grateful for being thus distinguished. If Mr. Ogilvie's book were of more importance, we should warn him to consult publick feeling on this matter a little more. His poor countryman, James M'Allister, must take the quarrel into his own hands ; and we beg him to make some allowance for Mr. Ogilvie's outrage, for when he gets into the western country, he seems infected with the wild independence of the region, and lays about him like a very backwoodsman.—This M'Allister, (who is one of the ten children of a Scotch weaver, and who ‘came nearer to the character of a scientifick sage, than any human being Mr. Ogilvie has ever known, with the exception of William Ogilvie, professor of humanity, in King's College, Old Aberdeen, in Scotland,’) has very prudently settled himself for life in our western country, with his wife and children about him, and, for all that we know, is a very good farmer, and makes a very good husband and father. Our author visited him, in the hope that he would be all he had once known him ; able to advise and encourage him in the prosecution of his noble enterprise.

'Here bitter was his disappointment! He found him alive, indeed, and neither in bad health, nor in unprosperous circumstances; but the ghost and shadow of what he might, the narrator adds with pain, *ought* to have been. He found him the idolater, and vassal of indolence; the breathing and unburied victim of a voluntary and seemingly predestined insignificance and obscurity.' 'Upon renewing his intercourse with this motiveless monster of intellect, he sensibly felt the infectious stupefaction of his incurable and seemingly innate lethargy. As he listened to his cogent but abhorred logick, the nervous but soul-chilling eloquence, with which he expatiated on the inanity of fame, present or posthumous,' on the difficulties that lie in the way of literary ambition, and on the nothingness of success, 'he felt conviction, "o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold."' 'This ill-fated man is doomed to pass the rest of his life, not where he ought to be, near the centre of the most enlightened circles in Edinburgh, London, or Paris, but in the bosom of the western wilderness. Yet even there, his *possible* value is inestimable. Could any popular Kentuckian patriot (Mr. Clay for instance) draw him from his idolized obscurity, and place him at the head of the College of Lexington (whose present president would surely vanish at the very sound of his name) he would give himself additional claims not only to the confidence and respect of his countrymen, but titles to the gratitude of posterity. It is afflicting, it is humiliating to reflect, that whilst the votaries of Mammon ransack the sunless and poison-breathing caverns of the earth; descend even to the ceiling of Pandemonium; venture almost into the jaws of death and hell, to extract gold from the bowels of the earth; patriotism will suffer wisdom to slumber inactively on it's surface, and genius to "waste its sweetness on the desert air." 'After a few interviews, he recoiled with implacable antipathy from this incarnate Genius of the Castle of Indolence, and fled from his society, before he had fastened his spell on his soul.' Sup. Narr. xliv. &c.

We cannot extract any more from the narrative, and we sincerely think that our readers will deal kindly with Mr. Ogilvie, if they will form their opinion of his manner, from the passages we have given.

We are now coming to the philosophy, and shall despatch our work very speedily. This part of the book consists of three Essays, with copious notes. And you

would judge perhaps from these, that the author had read largely, and that his fine memory was abundantly stored; that his mind had more of alacrity than insight, and was more greedy of accumulation than patient in exploring. If there were nothing else, his errors would be enough, to shew that he is exceedingly intrepid and independent in the use of his knowledge. We may say something of his style hereafter.

The first Essay is "On the Study of Mathematical Science." It is very short, and by far the most composed part of the book. The object is, to shew the uses of this study in disciplining and invigorating the mind, and thus indirectly helping to form the young orator. And the author swells into such enthusiasm, in behalf of his subject, that one might think his whole soul had been always devoted to abstract truth, and found its only atmosphere in the 'supernal regions of pure intelligence.' He seems to take a pleasure in exalting mathematics above the poor mutable fabricks of morals and physicks. The truth of mathematical science is divine, 'shedding the same "increate" and irrefrangible light on the minds of demons and damned spirits, and of Newton;' and (what seems too solemn for such a flourish,) we may even dare to believe that the evidence of its demonstration, 'is beheld in the same light by the Almighty mind, and the humblest and most fallible of his intelligent creatures.' Not content with simply shewing how the study gives habits of intense exertion, distinct, precise and composed thought, and stimulates inquiry and invention, he assures us,

'it is by the study of this sublime science, that juvenile intellect first "plumes its feathers and lets grow its wings;" "rises into regions mild of calm and serene air," "above the smoke and din of the dim spot, which men call earth." p. 17.

But a little after he grows more reasonable, and shews the tendency of a *premature* and excessive devotion to this study,

"not only to fold the wing and shut the eye of imagination, but to clip the plumage and cut the pectoral muscle of that "frolick wing." p. 25.

Well: we have learned to make great allowance for our author's singularities; for having read his book through, we have discovered, that he makes it a point to be passionately fond of his *present subject*, whatever it may be, and to give it pre-eminence. Otherwise, we should have wondered, that a man of so much rhetorick and enthusiasm, should be so eloquent in behalf of a study that deals in cold certainties, especially when he regards its exclusive votary as a being,

‘whose heart floats in a sort of mediocrity and apathy, in an element clear but cold; pure and bright, but colourless; calm and innoxious, but stagnant and insipid.’ p. 31.

Mr. Ogilvie had stated in the Essay, that this study could not *directly* contribute to the attainment of oratorical skill,

‘being exclusively conversant with truths, in the development of which, so far as consists in the exercise of a rich but disciplined imagination, of a pure yet refined taste, in the excitement of intense yet chastened passion, and in the exquisite embellishment of diction, oratory, in its technical and popular acceptance, is inadmissible.’ p. 17.

This appeared perfectly just, and probably nobody would find fault with it, but the author himself. Accordingly, in a note at the end of the Essays, he begins to repent, and thinks he has not been *philosophical* enough in this behalf.

‘But if we take a more enlarged and philosophical view of oratory, even the theorems of mathematical and *the principles of physical science*, may fall within the legitimate sphere of this glorious art.’ p. 267.

Now we shall not allow our author, without warning, to couple mathematicks with *natural philosophy*, especially as he speaks almost dispraisingly in the Essay of the latter science. Let the *divine science* stand by itself, and then hear our orator.

‘Imagine a great mathematician demonstrating such a theorem, in the presence of an audience, sufficiently enlightened to comprehend the progressive steps of his reasoning, as they are embodied by the utterance of the speaker: Imagine, that

with perfect distinctness of articulation, propriety of emphasis, a modulation of voice agreeable to the ear, and suitable dignity and vivacity of manner, he unfolds a principle that enlarges the boundaries of human knowledge, and reveals the arcana of nature to the inquiring mind. Feeling the most unshaken conviction of its truth and importance, and elevated by a consciousness of intellectual dignity, superiority and power, with what earnestness does he investigate, with what perspicuity develop, with what felicity illustrate its evidence and utility.—His emotions thicken with the discovery of truth, and his imagination is busy in anticipating its uses. He even displays a graceful and impassioned elocution.—‘Can the countenance be vacant, or the eye dim, the hand motionless, or the utterance frigid or monotonous, when the light of *eternal* truth irradiates the understanding, when the heart swells with the divine enthusiasm which it inspires, and with a lively anticipation of the unspeakable benefits, which it has in store for mankind?’ ‘These were the themes of oratory, that ravished the senses and the soul of Adam, as it flowed from the lips of Raphael. Whilst Adam listened to this seraphic oratory, he became unconscious, even of the divine beauties of Eden. The lovely mother of mankind, forgotten and unobserved, averied her eye from the fatal apple! At that moment, even the tempter had shrunk in conscious impotence from her ear, and listened with reluctant rapture to the seraph’s tongue.’ &c. p. 268–9.

This is what our author calls a more philosophical view of oratory. His passion for mathematical oratory, soon reaches such a height, that he declaims, without the least remorse, against mere worldly eloquence, and goes very near, we think, to demolishing the Rostrum itself. But he seems startled at the consequences, and closes the note with a prudent admission (which should have saved him from writing it,) that this mathematical oratory will not do now-a-days for popular purposes.

The second Essay, which is a good deal more ambitious, is “on the Nature, Extent and Limits of Human Knowledge, so far as it is founded in the relation of cause and effect, and concerns mind and matter.” We have here old truths and errours, and doubtful novelties, to say the least of them, served up to the ‘solitary reader,’ after the manner of the Rostrum. We shall not undertake to fol-

low Mr. Ogilvie through this Essay, for it would carry us greatly out of our limits, and much farther than is necessary to ascertain his pretensions to celebrity as a philosophical writer. He is so desultory and miscellaneous, adopts so readily the mistakes of others, and assumes so confidently what some would deny, and others ask him at least to explain, that any attempt to settle his meaning and correct his errors, would lead us over much of the field of modern scepticism; of ethical and metaphysical controversy. We shall look at his plan, and perhaps at an error or two, as we go along.

He first undertakes to set Locke right as to the inlets of knowledge; charging him with lack of philosophical precision, in ascribing to *reflection* instead of *consciousness*, our acquaintance with our intellectual faculties and operations. So far we are upon beaten ground. But we are in the wilderness, when Mr. Ogilvie calls reflection 'a concentration of consciousness on whatever (whether an impression from without, or an internal operation) excites peculiar interest.' Besides this, without any open quarrel with Locke or any body else respecting sensation or perception, he goes on (and this too for the sake of *precision*) to make *consciousness* the fountain of all our actual or possible knowledge.

'Our language, and of course our ideas, as they regard the philosophy of the human mind, will be more *precise*, if we consider whatever is known or knowable, as proceeding from our *consciousness*, first of *impressions from external objects*, and secondly of the internal energies that are called into action by these impressions.' p. 34.

If he tells us, he talks after the manner of Hume, we assure him that his exactest imitation of his master will lend no light to this subject, and moreover, he must give up talking about external objects and matter. We wish he had been less vague where it was his purpose, and an easy thing too, to be precise. He should have remembered that men (and great philosophers amongst them) are very much in the habit now, of finding objects of *perception* in things external, and those of *consciousness* in the mind only.

After this philosophical view of the origin of knowledge, he goes on to define the thing itself to be, 'the *arrangement* of the various subjects or modifications of consciousness, in the order of *cause* and *effect*.' If we understood him just now, these very 'subjects and modifications of consciousness' constitute knowledge, or '*the known*.' The definition then brings us to the important truth, that 'knowledge is the *arrangement* of knowledge in the order of cause and effect.' And we hold this to be a very extraordinary account of a very old word. It is mere assumption, and stands in great need of explanation and proof.

You must now expect to see him as enthusiastick about the relation of cause and effect, as he was just now about mathematics. 'The dignity of our nature, its preeminence and dominion upon earth, its capabilities of improvement *primordially* originate in its capacity to unravel indefinitely the chain of cause and effect.' Its progress in improvement is identified with the knowledge of this relation. The prophet evolves links in the chain by divine aid. The worker of miracles inserts new links. And the philosopher differs from the superficial, that the chain with him is longer, and composed of more and finer links. And by this wonderful relation, he understands,

'that order or succession, the discovery or development of which, empowers an intelligent being by means of one event or phenomenon, or by a series of given events or phenomena, to anticipate the recurrence of another event or phenomenon, or a required series of events or phenomena, and to summon them into existence, and employ their instrumentality, in the gratification of his wishes, or in the accomplishment of his purposes.' p. 35.

As these Essays are written for the young, we think this fundamental relation should have been explained more simply ; though we would not have our author undertake to prove his assertion, that every department of human knowledge is founded in this relation, lest he should succeed no better, than in his attempt to bring mathematics within his definition of knowledge, not indeed as com-



ing within any 'arrangement in the order of cause and effect,' but as helping us to *unravel* the chain !

It is certain, that we are very much in the dark as to *efficient* causes. We cannot trace what the philosophers call *necessary connexions* in the phenomena we witness ; nor can we explain the "manner in which one event proceeds from another as its cause." We observe a constant conjunction between certain events ; we confidently look for this conjunction hereafter, and are in the habit of calling that which precedes, the cause ; and that which follows, the effect. If this is what Mr. Ogilvie means, when he says, that we owe to Hume the first satisfactory elucidation of the fact, that our knowledge of cause and effect includes nothing more 'than a perception and belief of the uniform *antecedence* of one event and *sequence* of another,' we assure him, the fact was clearly held and explained, and by christian philosophers too, before Hume's speculations appeared. If Mr. Ogilvie's statement of the fact mean the same thing as ours, we can set him right on another point. He gives us to know, that Dr. Reid and his disciples, differ from Hume, and on *fallacious* grounds too, as to the fact which has just been stated. Mr. Ogilvie will find, by looking into the matter, that Dr. Reid and one of his disciples at least, opposed only the *sceptical conclusions*, which Hume drew from a principle they admitted.—The Doctor does indeed argue rather drily against Hume, that if mere priority or conjunction implied efficiency or causation, we may call day the cause of night, night the cause of day, and in this way make any thing to be the cause of any thing. We are sorry to see Mr. Ogilvie so much discomposed at this.\*—Dr. Reid does indeed deny, that there is any efficiency in priority or conjunction. Still he thinks we are greatly in the dark as to efficient causes, though he holds it to be a first principle,

\* The Shepherd tells Touchstone, "that a great cause of the night, is lack of the sun ;" or, in our author's elegant paraphrase, it is 'the absence of solar light in consequence of interposing terraqueous opacity.' Mr. Ogilvie actually undertakes to support the shepherd's proposition, in a very vigorous analysis of day and night, shewing how 'they resolve themselves into four links in the chain of cause and effect.' p. 51.

that there must be an efficient cause for every phenomenon we witness. He is merely saving men from dreary scepticism. Mr. Ogilvie should have understood his countryman better, and remembered that Hume himself may possibly better deserve the charge of 'sophistical artifice,' than such a straight-forward observer as Dr. Reid.

The foundation of knowledge being laid, our author proceeds to analyse the relation of cause and effect; and begins with inquiring into the grounds of our belief, that the succession of events in time future, will resemble that of events in time past. He takes Adam, (who had the advantage of being full grown from the first, and who surely would be the only person, who could have any doubts on the subject) and gives a flourishing account of the supposed state of his mind, as to the reappearance of the sun after its first set. At first, he is in perfect uncertainty; but the repeated and regular return of the luminary would, by and by, give him a firm assurance of the unbroken alternation of day and night; though it would take an antediluvian life at least, to become as sure of the fact as we are. So Mr. Ogilvie adopts Hume's hypothesis, and resolves our belief in this case into custom or habit; while Dr. Reid would make it a part of our constitution. Here then is our author's creed, and we take it to be a mere obscuration of Hume. He is now in motion, and the remainder of the *Essay* is devoted to defining the regions of the *knowable*, and drawing several conclusions from the whole matter. Of these, and the enormous notes upon every thing, we can say nothing.

We wish, however, that our author had avoided ambiguity and contradiction, upon the delicate subject of the immutability of truth. He is so hard upon poor Beattie, for wanting philosophy in treating this subject, that he should have been exceedingly careful of his own growing reputation in that line. At one time he tells us, that the doctrine of the immutability of the moral and physical order of the universe, leads directly to atheism; and at another, that the mighty laws of nature bind with "adamantine chains," and support with "Atlantean shoulders" the *immutable order* of the moral and material universe.' This is loose,

and satisfies us that his oratory and rhetoric are greatly in the way of his philosophy and logick.

The last and, by a page or two, the longest Essay, is upon the "Modern abuse of moral fiction in the shape of Novels." It is of this Essay, that he says, 'every sentence came, (gushed he had almost said) from his heart.' 'The subject is so peculiarly susceptible of rhetorical embellishment, so admirably adapted to the purposes of impassioned declamation, that he offers no apology for the style.' It was fair to warn us of this; so we entered prepared, and found a good deal of just remark, mixed up with the mistakes of a solitary man, who thinks too much of the dangers, to which society is exposed from false representations of life given in novels, merely because he is not aware what a cluster of realities and "tangible motives" there is around us of the city, which breaks up our illusions, and brings us down to "sober certainty," long before we begin to act. Still there is a laudable honesty in Mr. Ogilvie's zeal, and no doubt he strikes at many real mischiefs.—If a fiction is intended for our taste merely, or for our moral improvement too, it should certainly be consistent. Let it be poetry or life; or if it give models for practical use, let them be such as are fitted for beings cast as we are, even though we may not see around us, any actual combination of virtues, which will answer to that in the story.—It is needless to say, that novels, like every thing else in literature, have fallen too much into the hands of men whom nature never formed for authors; men void of genius, ignorant of life, getting their marvels and love from wild romance or idle pastoral, and mixing all up in a way of vulgar tawdriness, to entertain boys and girls, who have more sensibility perhaps, but not a jot more of experience than the authors themselves. Thus it is that the young are inflamed or misguided, and their relish for a book turned to sickly stories; not to fine fable, which fertilizes the imagination; to high adventures, which stimulate curiosity and make one stretch beyond his own home; not to history or travels, which are crowded with truth as well as excitement; and all which may be enjoyed by the young, not only without enfeebling and dissipating the mind, but actually purifying and strengthening it. No—it is to mawkish, immoral, delusive nonsense; to which the herd of novel-writers tempt

their readers, and to which our printers are often most unworthy auxiliaries, inasmuch, as, having it in their power to do something for our taste and morals, with profit to themselves, they still contribute to keep alive and gratify our diseased longing for bad fiction and wretched composition. If a dull poem comes out, it is in general sure to die shortly, or to live in a very narrow region ; for poetry is somewhat the property and luxury of the intelligent, or at least owes its popularity for the most part to their judgments ; and perhaps no other sort of composition depends so much upon skill, and shews so plainly and so fatally its own defects. But the meanest novel has the vulgar charm of a story, and almost any thing of this sort will have admirers. The clumsy workmanship is kept out of sight, by wonders and *sentimentality*. The favourite volume is soiled to-day in the kitchen, and tomorrow in the parlour. It has readers among the high and low, to sigh and melt over its extravagance and lies. Fortunately, there are fine novels too, that have a place in literature, and save the moderns from the reproach of failure in a species of composition, that has no model in antiquity.—We have of late been gratified with novels of a new class, which we may perhaps call *religious*. We set ‘Discipline’ at the head of these, and venture to hope that authors, blest with genius and knowledge of life, will hereafter learn from this book, that the *direct* mention of our religion may be seriously introduced in a novel, without injuring its sale, or subjecting the author to the charge of cant or hypocrisy.

We are growing almost as zealous as Mr. Ogilvie. But we cannot recommend this Essay for a philosophical one, any more than the others.

The extracts we have made, are probably enough to let our readers into the peculiarities of Mr. Ogilvie’s style, though we assure them we have not sought out defects, and we think the author himself will allow, that we have omitted some of the most vicious passages. He was writing for the young, and therefore concluded that ornament and copious illustration were indispensable to gaining attention. His long habit of popular declamation led him, in preparing his book, to adopt the same mode he had practised on the Rostrum, of moving the affections, and neglect-

ing the judgment. He had also unfortunately found out, 'that Dugald Stewart had done more to recommend the philosophy of the mind, than any other man, by his style and illustrations.' All these things conspired, with his own defects of taste, to persuade him that truth was but an unsavoury morsel of itself, and would go down and nourish one better, if fairly smothered by cookery.—At the close of the volume, he looks back upon his labours, with the mournful remembrance of exhausting toils made fruitless by defects. An author has some claims upon our compassion, (and this Mr. Ogilvie very honourably disdains) who shuts up so long a work with acknowledgments of deficiency, *unpreparedness* and *unaccustomedness*, and with sad allusions to his lonely and unfriended labours. He came at last to a 'clear conviction of the radical malignity of metaphor,' and means in *another* work, to shew its unfitness, not only in philosophical disquisition, but even for the purposes of poetical embellishment. We are glad to find him for once, in an error on the safe side, and will quote his favourite Hume, by way of reproof and encouragement. "In all abstract reasonings, there is one point of view, which, if we can happily hit, we shall go farther towards illustrating the subject, than by all the eloquence and copious expression in the world. This point of view we should endeavour to reach, and reserve the flowers of rhetorick for subjects which are more adapted to them."

The wonder with us is, how Mr. Ogilvie should have studied fine authors so long, and certainly become acquainted with the taste of readers, and yet had the courage to carry into his book as bad composition, as he could possibly expect to pass off on a mixed crowd, by all the helps of his fine speaking. We find fault with his excesses and his gilding; but we would not have it thought, that he gives us the gorgeous, perhaps licentious diction of the early writers, or the fresh extravagance of a school-boy, or the hurried imagery of a writer who is warm with his subject, is caught for a moment by an illustration, gives it in a word, and rushes on impatiently with his reflections. He strikes us more like a man, who makes ornaments and beauties out of his dictionary, though he often gives proofs of a rich fancy, and of nice susceptibility to beauty in others.—We are perhaps the more disgusted, at seeing sober philoso-

phy arrayed in such sorry and unbecoming finery. One is almost tempted to think, that in Mr. Ogilvie's mind, tropes and beauties were thrown in amongst facts and conclusions, so that in looking for a truth, he was bewitched by the light graces that started up, and that he could only bring it out, hung round with the flaunting ornaments that lay near it. When we think of the sumptuousness and vagueness of his language, the solemnity and poetical indistinctness of his statements, the boundless stretch of his views, when he begins to follow out the consequences of his reasoning, and the unexpected beauties that now and then shew themselves, we are tempted to call this work the most grotesque literary curiosity we have seen, and shall venture, with Dryden's leave, to pronounce our author's manner, the philosophical "fairy-way of writing."

Amongst his first wants, are simplicity, calmness, and directness. He wants courage to say a thing outright, and sometimes props himself up by mere words, whilst aspiring to a distant beauty that has caught his fancy. He has no natural falls and elevations, to suit the varieties of thought. He is always straining and striving, and actually talks of the 'damnatory weight of blasphemy,' in a man who spoke lightly of Cicero. He is so sweeping and boisterous in his severest philosophical investigations, that we are constantly reminded of 'his rifle of analysis, and the Congreve rockets of philosophical rhetoric.'—His want of skill is seldom more remarkable, than in his long parenthetical sentences. We like 'sentential length,' as he calls it, in the hands of a practised writer, who goes through a long process of accumulation, with a strict preservation of dependence in his thoughts, enabling us as we go along to feel, (if we may use expressions that have been applied to logical reasoning) not only the concatenation of the links, but that the whole chain is still fastened to the hook, or yet further to the beam. The process is indeed very artificial, but we like to see it well carried through. Our author is singularly unskilful at this work, though he is particularly ambitious to excel in it. If we had room, we might justify this remark, by a passage from the Narrative, (p. lxxxv, &c) where we have one sentence of two pages, including three paragraphs.—He is as fond of parentheses as of long sentences, and they are often quite as embarrassing. In the

very spirit of the song, beginning we believe with, "what's an old bachelor like," he shews us what an unparenthetical style is like;

"A hand without a palm; glands without absorbents; a chamber without closets; a coat or a pair of pantaloons without pockets; a side-board without compartments; a trunk without a boot; p. xcviii.

For all this, we have seen our author quite lost in a sentence of moderate length, even with the aid of a parenthesis within a parenthesis. Sup. Nar. xxii &c. Till he is more practised, he had much better condescend to write in the uninvolved manner of his favourites, Campbell and Hume.—It will not do for Mr. Ogilvie to affect contempt of style, because he has found so many blemishes in his own. We believe that his defects of composition are nearly connected with important defects in his mind and ways of thinking, and are an essential injury to his meaning, where he has any. And when we ask him to reform his manner altogether, it is not merely from a regard to the taste of his fastidious readers, but because we believe that a simple, direct mode of expression, both indicates and imperceptibly promotes clearness of thought, and will save him from mistaking words for substance.

But we must close, though we had something to say of his innumerable compound epithets, his bad English, his childish way of dovetailing fragments of borrowed poetry or prose into his text, and of his beggarly repetition, again and again, of passages that are quite familiar, except when he misquotes them.—The neglect in which his book continues to sleep, is another symptom, that something like good taste is growing up amongst us; and we are really glad that the work cannot, with any justice, be thrown upon our literature. If the book had been of any value, his countrymen would certainly have claimed it, and we shall not allow them to cast it upon our hands now, though it would be in their way to tell us, that *we* spoil the author. We are charitable enough, when we have any thing to bestow; but the fact is, we have no literary reputation to spare. We have enough bad writing of our own, without adopting that of foreigners. We leave Mr. Ogilvie to "*the august and*

*appellate tribunals of criticism*" (whose notice and favour he confidently expects,) for abler censure or worthier commendation than ours ; and in parting, we beg him, whatever he may do for the improvement of our boys in speaking, by all means to let their composition alone.

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*Airs of Palestine; a Poem: by John Pierpont, Esq. Second Edition. Boston: published by Wells and Lilly. 1817.*

THEY who have seen in Europe, genius looking to the press as the only means of reward, have little notion how small a portion of the talent and literature of this country flow through that channel ; they know not how many offices of power and trust, all in the gift of the people, and all with high requisitions of information are necessary to conduct our complicated system of confederate government ; they know not the price of talent we pay for our liberties and their security. We can spare few of our citizens from the necessary labours of life, and they are all employed in one form or the other in governing the rest. No sooner is a man of talent exempted by fortune from labour, than he is involved in politicks ; and in a *government of opinions* like ours, where individual intellect has full scope for its ambition, few will be content with the barren praise of scholarship. In Europe the avenues of office are crowded with applicants, and disappointed genius turns to literature for bread : here our increasing population, peculiar form of government, and the republican doctrine of rotation in office, create a constant demand of talent for the publick service.

With this opinion of the comparative talent and literature of our country, we are pleased with the appearance of a poem like the *Airs of Palestine*, not because it discovers more poetical power than we believe many of our countrymen to possess, but because we are glad to see so much talent redeemed from other pursuits. Nor, to confess our individual opinion, is the merit of this performance the immediate cause of the importance we attach to it ; single and unsupported it can do little for the encouragement of our